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**Indiana Chamber Announces Coolest Thing Made in Indiana Champ, Rankings for Inaugural Indiana’s Best Places to Work in Manufacturing**

**December 14, 2022 (INDIANAPOLIS)** — At the first Best IN Manufacturing luncheon today, the [Indiana Chamber of Commerce](http://www.indianachamber.com) celebrated that thriving industry by honoring the makers that have risen to the top in the Coolest Thing Made in Indiana competition and Indiana’s Best Places to Work in Manufacturing program.

“The importance of Hoosier manufacturers cannot be overstated. They create the goods that sustain individuals and businesses all across the state. And the products make their way throughout the nation and around the world,” says Indiana Chamber President and CEO Kevin Brinegar.

The second Coolest Thing Made in Indiana contest wound up being a battle of Kosciusko County. In the end, online voters crowned Maple Leaf Farms – and its roast half duck – of Leesburg the champion and Polywood of Syracuse – the maker of a 12-piece pit sectional – the runner-up.

Founded in 1958, Maple Leaf Farms has grown to 900 employees and produces about 40% of the nation’s duck supply. The winning entry, the roast half duck, is a fully cooked dish that both saves chefs time and allows consumers to create a restaurant quality meal at home for their families, according to the company.

Joining Maple Leaf Farms and Polywood in the semifinals were Hiker Trailers in Columbus and Kidstuff Playsystems in Gary. Rounding out the top eight: Grinds Coffee Pouches in Westfield, Hard Truth Distilling Co. in Nashville, Hudson Aquatic Systems in Angola and Wag’n Tails Mobile Conversions in Granger.

The field began with 54 makers that represented 43 Hoosier communities and a wide variety of products made – from racing tires to children’s car seats to wine and video notes – and even Batmobile replicas.

Brinegar reports the battles were often fierce, with thousands of votes cast in every round.

“Indiana is fortunate to be home to companies that grow and make all kinds of things,” he enthuses. “We are thrilled to recognize and bring attention to some of the state’s best and most innovative manufacturers. We especially congratulate Maple Leaf Farms on its well-deserved victory.”

Learn about all the companies in the tournament at [www.indianachamber.com/coolestthing](http://www.indianachamber.com/coolestthing).

An online randomizer generated the initial Coolest Thing Made in Indiana matchups, with online voting determining the winners in each round. There was no entry fee to participate. A company did not need to be headquartered in Indiana, but the product submitted had to be manufactured in the state.

The inaugural Indiana’s Best Places to Work in Manufacturing program saw 14 companies recognized with Kalenborn Abresist Corporation of Urbana coming in at the very top. The Wabash County company develops and manufactures custom solutions for the protection of industrial facilities from wear and impact damage to ensure the proper flow of materials in the production process.

“Manufacturing workplaces must adhere to various safety and other regulations. Every company on the list not only is committed to those standards but goes above and beyond for its workers and is a leader in its community,” Brinegar offers.

“Kalenborn Abresist, in particular, showed how it values its employees and frequently recognized them and jobs well done.”

The 2022 Indiana Best Places to Work in Manufacturing companies range in Hoosier employee count from 39 to over 7,600. The list by ranking:

1. Kalenborn Abresist Corporation in Urbana
2. Nucor Steel Indiana in Crawfordsville
3. IBC Materials & Technologies LLC in Lebanon
4. Nix Companies in Poseyville
5. Nexxt Spine LLC in Noblesville
6. CrossPoint Polymer Technologies LLC in Evansville
7. Oliver Winery in Bloomington
8. Wag’n Tails Mobile Conversions in Granger
9. Major Tool and Machine in Indianapolis
10. MCP USA, Inc. in Portage
11. SMC Corporation of America in Noblesville
12. Lippert in Elkhart
13. Functional Devices, Inc. in Sharpsville
14. Kelco Industries in Fremont

Wag’n Tails Mobile Conversions pulled off a double – also being honored as a Coolest Thing Made in Indiana company quarterfinalist.

Recognized Best Places companies were determined through employer reports and comprehensive employee surveys. The Workforce Research Group handled the selection process.

Learn more about Indiana’s Best Places to Work in Manufacturing in the current issue of *BizVoice* magazine at [www.bizvoicemagazine.com](http://www.bizvoicemagazine.com).

Best IN Manufacturing sponsors are spirit sponsor Purdue Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP); gold sponsor Gibson; and silver sponsors Evonik Corporation, Insperity, Nucor Steel Indiana, SMC Corporation of America and The Horton Group.

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